I NEVER HAD REAL FRIENDS.

BEING ALONE WAS PAINFUL.

BUT BECAUSE OF MY FAMILY..

..HAVING A FRIEND JUST BECAME AN OPTION TO ME.

THEY WERE MY BEST FRIENDS.

THEY ARE MY LIGHT.

" OPEN YOUR EYES"

THIS PLACE IS-...

BUT HE WAS DIFFERENT.

WITHIN HIS VOICE I FELT THE

LONELINESS I HAD WHEN
I WAS A CHILD.

PLEASE..
STAY.

HE'S JUST LIKE ME.

31

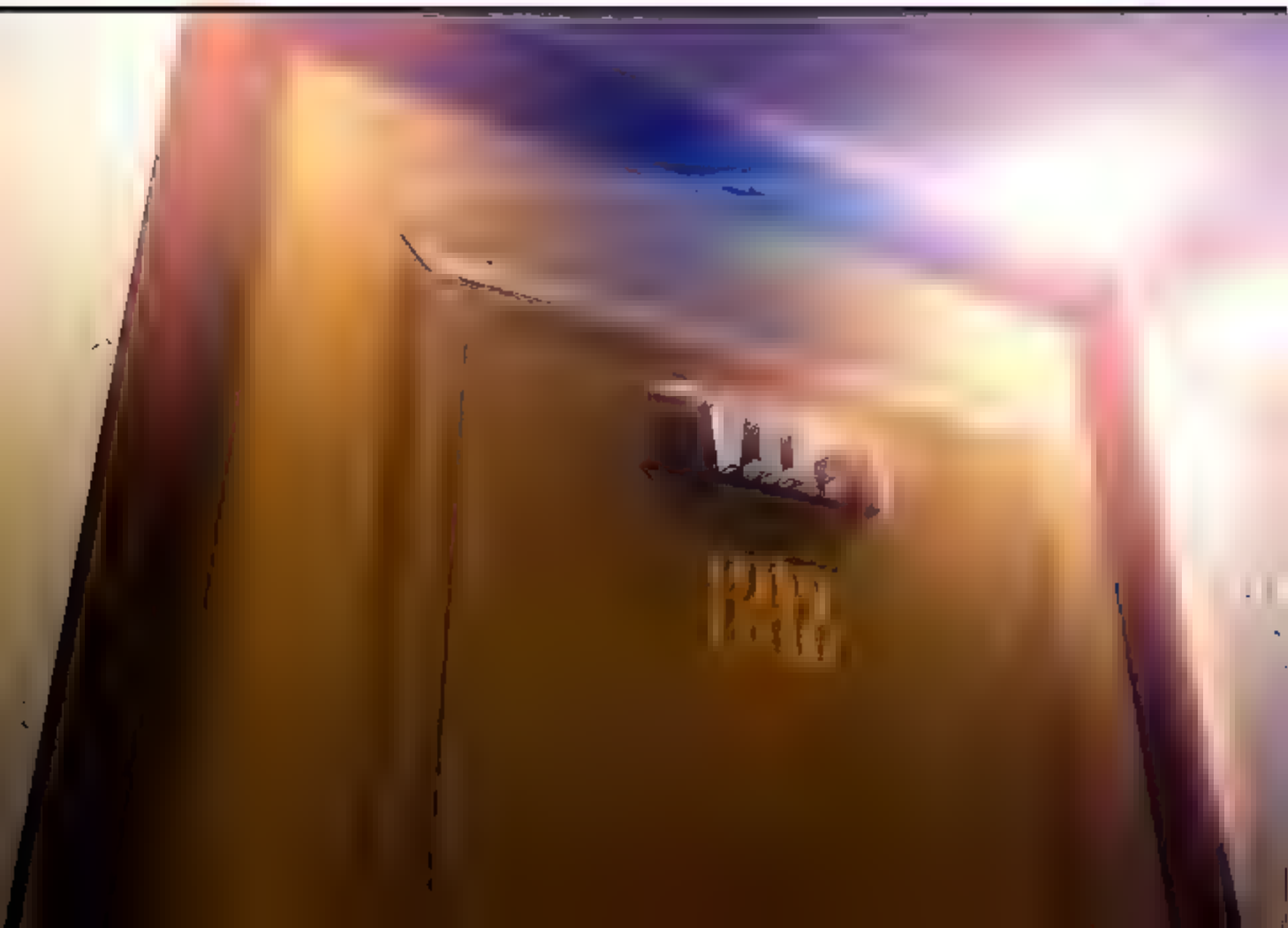
Strongest Team

10:30 P.M.

TOKYO

MEANWHILE, IN TOKYO..

GREENE & CO. HOTEL



YES.
SHIMIZU SUMIRE SPEAKING.

MILADY-SAN! CAN WE GO NOW? IT'S TOO BORING HERE!

I WANNA' PLAY IN THE POOL!

YEAH. HOW LONG DO WE HAVE TO WAIT FOR THIS KI-HYEON GUY?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? A DINNER, WHY? I TOLD YOU NOT TO LEAVE THEM ALONE

OKAY.

UH-HUH

MM ALRIGHT

CAN WE ORDER SOMETHING? I'M HUNGRY.

MM.

ANYA SAID SHE'D END EVERYTHING TONIGHT? ARE YOU SURE?

TCH!

WATCH BOTH OF THEM. I DON'T WANT THAT GUY TO GET CLOSE TO ANYA. YOU ARE THE MANAGER, RIGHT? THEN DO YOUR JOB PROPERLY!

UPDATE ME WHEN THERE'S GOOD NEWS.

ARE THOSE TWO HAVING A RELATIONSHIP?!

HE DID NOT EVEN REPLY TO MY MESSAGES.

THIS AXEL PISSES ME OFF!

ALRIGHT..
SO ARE YOU GUYS
FEELING GOOD?

OUR "ACE" MEMBER WILL BE HERE SOON SO LET'S WAIT A BIT.

I'VE READ ARTICLES ABOUT TEAM NATHAN'S "ACE", KOIZUMI AXEL..

IS HE REALLY THAT TOUGH FOR YOU TO HAVE KI-HYEON IN YOUR TEAM?

I DON'T TAKE CHANCES. WHO KNOW'S WHAT THIS KOIZUMI AXEL CAN DO. THE ONLY THING I WANT IS TO OWN THE GREEN & CO. HOTELS.

AND NOW THAT YOU JOINED MY TEAM, MY VICTORY IS ASSURED.

YOU MADE A GOOD DECISION.
THIS IS NOT JUST MY

AS WELL.

HEH. DON'T GET ME WRONG MILADY. I DID NOT JOIN THE TEAM FOR YOUR PLEASURE OR TO BECOME A RECIPE TO YOUR FANTASIES...

I JOINED FOR MY OWN PURPOSE.

I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE PRIZE MONEY OR FAME..
I JUST WANT TO DESTROY HER AND CRIPPLE HER PRIDE.

SHE WAS STRONG, TALENTED AND WISE. I USED TO IDOLIZE HER LIKE A GODDESS.

..BUT SHE'S A FAKE.

AFTER I KNEW WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN HER AND NATHAN GREENE

GREENE;..

I LOST MY RESPECT FOR HER.

SHE DOESN'T DESERVE HER TITLE AND I HATE WALKING BEHIND HER SHADOW.

NOW THAT SHE PASSED THE BATON TO HER DAUGHTER, THIS IS THE PERFECT CHANCE TO PROVE THAT I AM BETTER THAN ANY PLAYER OUT THERE.

THE WORLD WILL WITNESS HOW I MOP

THE FLOOR OUT OF THE FORMER CHAMPIONS' DAUGHTER.

BEATING ANYA

IS LIKE..

..BEATING BOTH NATHAN AND AYANE AT ONCE.

PFFFT! NOW THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE AT ALL.

THIS ANYA GIRL IS NOT EVEN A PLAYER. SHE'S NEVER PARTICIPATED ANY AMATEUR TOURNAMENTS.

EVEN I CAN BEAT HER WITH MY EYES CLOSED.

DEFEATING A SORRY ASS WANNABE WON'T GET YOU ANYWHERE.

YOU BETTER
NOT UNDERESTIMATE
MY COUSIN, JESSIE.

TRUE,
SHE'S NEVER BEEN
TO ANY TOURNAMENTS
BUT REMEMBER,
SHE'S PLAYING WITH
A FORMER TENNIS
CHAMPION EVERYDAY.

THAT ALONE,
YOU SHOULD FEEL
THREATENED.

PLAYING WITH
A PRO DOESN'T MEAN
YOU CAN PLAY WELL
LIKE THEM.

HER, NOT JOINING
COMPETITIONS PROVES
HER INCOMPETENCE.
SHE'S NOT CONFI-
DENT WITH HER
TENNIS,

ATLEAST
SHE'S A HOT
BABE THOUGH.

WHETHER SHE'S A WANNABE OR THE REAL DEAL,..

EITHER WAY,
I WILL STILL
DESTROY HER.

ALISTRATION

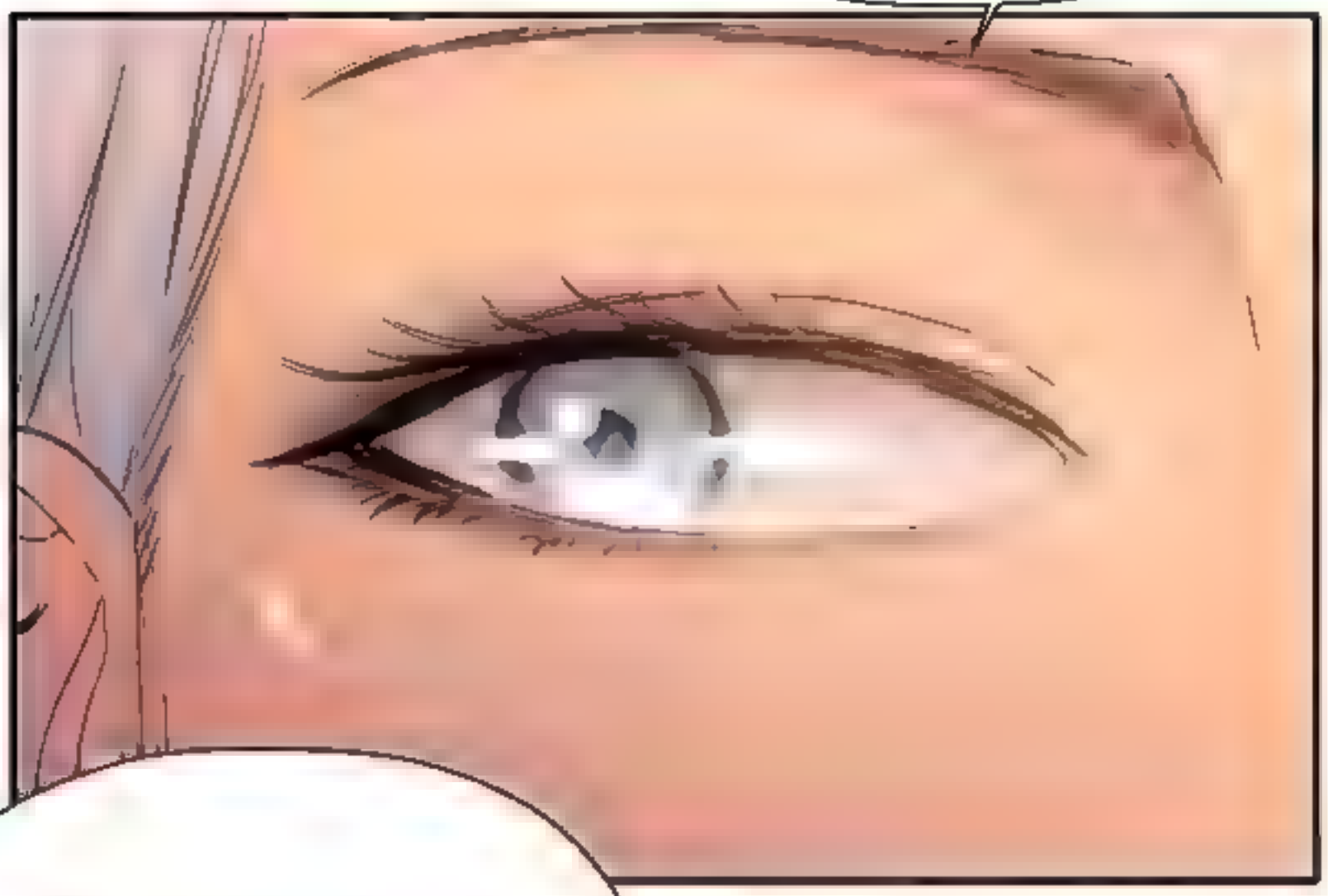
AND REMAIN AS
THE ONE AND ONLY,

TEAM SUMIRE

YOU SURE ARE FIRED UP, MISS ALISTRATOV.

SHOULD I TRUST
THAT CONFIDENCE?

YOU SHOULD.



BUT DON'T TAKE IT AGAINST ME IF YOUR COUSIN DECIDES TO QUIT AFTER THE TOKYO SPORTS FEST.

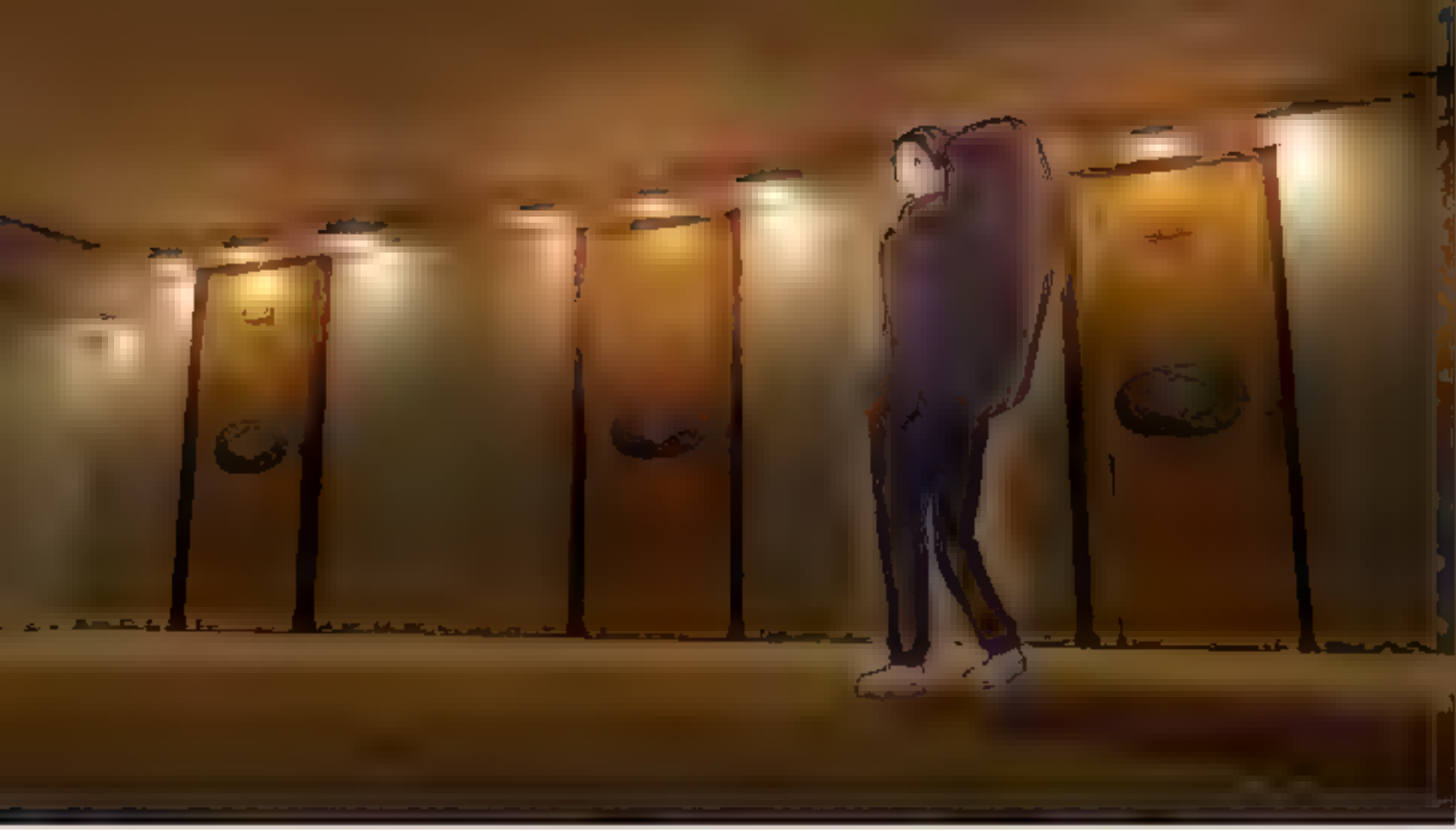
ACTUALLY THAT WORKS ON MY FAVOR AS WELL.

I CAN'T GET HER TO QUIT TENNIS SO THIS MIGHT BE THE ONLY WAY.

THEN
WE'RE GOOD.

UUU..
UHNNN...

WE'RE GOOD AS LONG AS WE WIN. NOW I CAN FINALLY RELAX.



KNOCK
KNOCK

WHO IS IT?

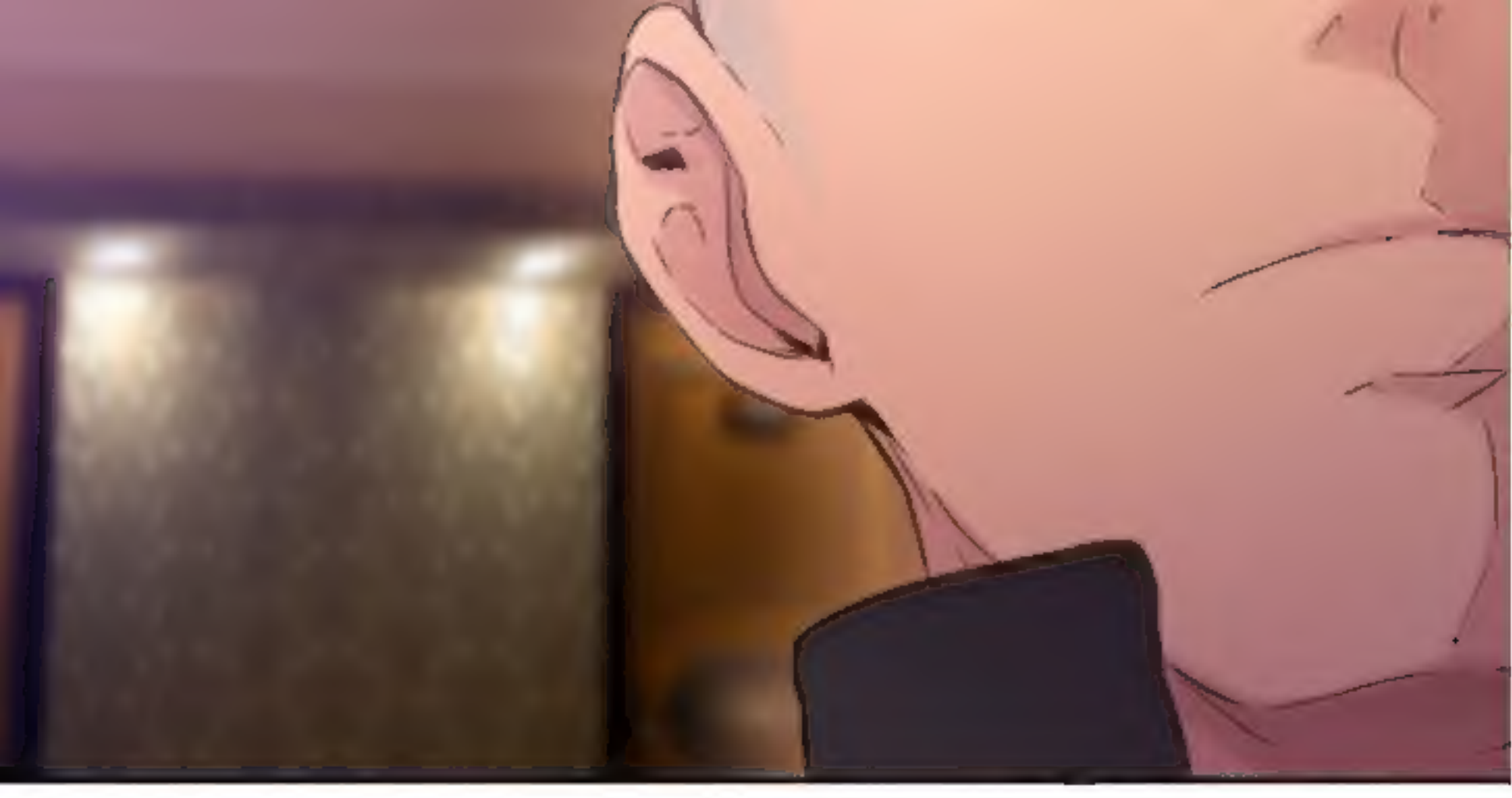
MILADY,
IT'S ME.

CLACK..

FINALLY,
YOU CAME..

WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU..

YUN-KI-HYEON.



TO BE CONTINUED..

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